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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000449

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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO AND BOSNIA MAP: A SNAPSHOT OF ALLIED OPINION

Classified By: DCM John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: With the December 2-3 NATO Foreign Ministerial quickly approaching, Allies are beginning to seriously discuss whether and how to respond to the applications of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to join the Membership Action Plan process. While most Allies do not believe that BiH is ready for MAP, there are mixed views about how to handle Montenegro's application. Of particular concern for some Allies is how a positive decision on MAP for Montenegro could impact Ukraine and Georgia. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C/NF) In recent weeks, we have had a series of discussions with Allies about how the Alliance should respond at the December Foreign Ministerial to the Membership Action Plan applications of Montenegro and Bosnia. While most Allies acknowledged that their capitals were still reviewing the questions involved, the following provides an initial snapshot of Allied opinion on the subject.

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What to do with Montenegro?  
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¶3. (C/NF) Allies generally acknowledge that Montenegro has been heading in the right direction in its reforms, but have not yet formed a common opinion on how they should respond to Podgorica's November 2008 application to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP). While most countries still do not yet have a national position, several main camps have emerged.

¶4. (C/NF) Germany, which as little as six months ago sought to downplay Montenegro's successes during its Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) assessment, recently said it was "quite positive" about granting Montenegro's MAP application at the December Foreign Ministerial. Canada, Hungary, and Slovenia also appear ready to make a positive decision on Montenegro's MAP application in December.

¶5. (C/NF) Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic -- while not opposed in principle to granting MAP to Montenegro -- are concerned about the impact such a decision could have on Georgia and Ukraine, countries that

sought unsuccessfully for years to join MAP. They fear that the two countries would feel like they are being "leap-frogged" by countries that have been on the NATO reform path for a much shorter time. They also fear that it could send the wrong signal to Moscow, leading it to conclude (despite NATO summit assurances to the contrary) that it had been successful in pressuring Allies to set aside the possibility of a NATO future for these two countries. As a result, supporters of Ukraine and Georgia might try to link MAP for Montenegro with more forward leaning language for Ukraine and Georgia. In other words, they would want to make clear that Ukraine and Georgia would not still have to through the MAP process at a later stage. We have urged against this approach, which would reopen the divisive MAP debates of the last two years. Similarly, we have urged Germany to refrain from divisive language from their side.

¶16. (C/NF) France had wanted to hold off on Montenegro at least until the spring to forestall the old debates over Ukraine and Georgia. The French delegation has since told us that it might agree to Montenegro MAP in December, if/if France can be convinced that this can be accomplished without reopening the old debates. Similarly, the Netherlands told us that it had not received updated instructions from the ones they had at NATO's Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April -- which was to avoid the enlargement debate.

¶17. (C/NF) The UK would also like to hold off on Montenegro until the spring, but for different reasons. London admits that Montenegro is ready for MAP, but hopes to leverage a

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linkage with Bosnia to force BiH to make needed reforms. The UK plan would call for language in the December ministerial communique noting that the two countries will have the implementation of their Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) assessed in the spring. According to the UK, the December communique could state that "with a good IPAP assessment" the two countries could then be invited to join MAP. Poland has expressed some sympathy with the UK position, but has noted that it would not block any emerging consensus to offer MAP to Montenegro in December. (Note: Although Germany has acknowledged that the completion of the IPAP cycle is not a prerequisite for MAP, it has also said that the UK suggestion is "not unreasonable." End Note)

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The easier case - Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)  
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¶18. (C/NF) BiH, which only applied to join MAP on October 2, presents a far easier case. Few Allies are willing to consider a positive decision for Bosnia at this time. While Allies generally want to see BiH integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures, they believe that the country is currently trending in the wrong direction. Not only do they doubt the current government's ability to carry out the reforms necessary to be successful in MAP, they worry that the country is too politically unstable. As a result, most Allies will be reluctant to grant MAP until they see evidence that the BiH is emerging from its latest political crisis. Norway, for example, has said that it would want to see visible progress in the implementation of reforms and not just the passage of legislation before agreeing to grant MAP status.

¶19. (C/NF) There are a few exceptions to this general trend, however. Croatia wants to press for Bosnian MAP in December, although its Mission to NATO is more realistic about Zagreb's limited chance of success to push this issue through to a positive answer. Although Madrid has said it has not reached a final decision, the Spanish Mission told us that it has historically favored a "regional approach" and therefore might support MAP for both countries in December. Hungary and Slovenia have informally said there is some merit in rewarding what positive behavior BiH has demonstrated by

supporting its application for MAP. These countries, however, are clearly in the minority.

¶10. (C/NF) Even if these issues were resolved, the problems already identified in the case of Montenegro -- particularly how to handle the related issue of Georgia and Ukraine -- would also apply to Bosnia.

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COMMENT  
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¶11. (C/NF) Getting consensus to grant MAP for Montenegro in December will require that we press Allies on both sides of the Ukraine/Georgia debate to stick to the hard-fought compromises that have already been reached. Attempts by supporters of those countries to press for more forward leaning language could not only derail Montenegro MAP, it could also lead to a refighting of the bloody battles Allies fought over the last several years. Not only is it likely that Ukraine/Georgia supporters would be unsuccessful in achieving their goals, it might actually prove to be counter-productive. Getting them to back off will require us to make clear that we will continue to support Ukraine and Georgia in their aspirations via their new Commission/ANP mechanism. Similarly, we must push back against any efforts by Germany or others to claim that our decision to pursue MAP for Montenegro means that MAP must therefore also be the ultimate path for Ukraine and Georgia. Only if both sides abide by the agreed truce can we successfully put NATO

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enlargement back on track in the Balkans.  
DAALDER